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and they are now less than one and a half million compared with the Chinese eight and a half or so in a total population approaching one hundred and sixty million. Nor can they compare with their fellow immigrants in wealth and influence. The Chinese in Southeast Asia are of the greatest political, economic, and social significance to the region and, indirectly, to the world as a whole, but until now no comprehensive study of them has been attempted. The considerations that have led me to venture to provide what is at least an outline of the subject are as follows.

To carry out the research necessary for an adequate history of the Chinese in the seven countries of the region (counting 'British Borneo' as one), together with a basic study of Chinese emigration into Southeast Asia and its causes, to collate the material, and to write the work itself would, in all reasonableness, take some seven or eight years. Moreover, the qualifications for embarking on such an enterprise should include, first, an extensive background knowledge of China and the Chinese, secondly, a close acquaintance with the several countries of Southeast Asia and their histories, and, thirdly, at least a working knowledge of a score of languages and dialects. Since no person of the necessary qualifications, leisure, or ambition appeared to be forthcoming, and the need for a primer on Chinese affairs in this region was urgent, I decided to be greatly daring and to try my hand at a single impressionistic volume. My qualifications fell far short of the desideratum, but among them were two years of study in Canton, a period of attachment to the Hong Kong Government, and an intimate contact with the Chinese in Malaya, as a Colonial official, for over a quarter of a century.[1] I had visited the countries themselves at different times (the last occasion being as consultant to the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East in 1947), and I had an acquaintance with the Chinese written language and the Cantonese and Mandarin dialects as well as a working knowledge of French, Spanish, Italian, and Malay, with some German, Portuguese, and Dutch. I had also served an apprenticeship in the subject by writing a study of the Chinese in one country of the area.[2]

[1] Many appointments, held during this period, included those of magistrate, Protector of Chinese, Assistant Director of Education (Chinese), and Director-General of Information. Under the British Military Administration (1945–6) I was Colonel, Principal Adviser on Chinese affairs.

[2] *The Chinese in Malaya* (London, Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs and the Institute of Pacific Relations, 1948).

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I am most grateful to those who have assisted me in this way, and I am flattered that persons of eminence should have considered my text worth the trouble they have bestowed upon it. My thanks are due to Mr B. R. Pearn for reading the entire work, and to the following who read one or more parts of it—Mrs Patricia Barnett, Sir Paul Butler, Mr Chu-pei Chen, Mr Richard Couglin, Mr F. S. V. Donnison, Miss Cora Du Bois, Professor J. J. L. Duyvendak, Professor Raymond Firth, Mr Tom Harrisson, Mr J. D. Higham, Sir Robert Holland, Mr A. F. P. Hulsewé, Mr N. R. Jarrett, Mr George McT. Kahin, Mr Paul Kattenburg, Professor Raymond Kennedy, Professor R. D. Kollewijn, Dr K. P. Landon, M. Roger Lévy, Sir Raibeart MacDougall, Mr J. V. Mills, Mr R. S. Milward, Mr O. H. Morris, Professor Karl Pelzer, Miss Catherine Porter, Mr Ifor B. Powell, Mr W. A. C. Smelt, Sir Robert Smith, Mr R. T. Tan, Professor Arnold Toynbee, Dr B. M. Vlekke, and Mr W. A. Ward. I am indebted also to Mr R. A. D. Forrest, lecturer in Tibeto-Burman languages in the University of London, for writing an appendix on the dialects of South China especially for this work, to Dr Janus Poppe for considerable help with Dutch texts, to Miss A. C. J. Willems of the Netherlands Information Bureau in London for assistance of a similar kind, and to Mr Leonard Unger and the American Geographical Society for permission to reproduce the map showing the distribution of Chinese in Southeast Asia. I have also to thank Mr Richard Adloff, Dr Virginia Thompson Adloff, Mr Leonard Aurousseau, Professor C. R. Boxer, Mr R. S. Busuego, Mr H. M. Cheng, Mr I. C. Cheng, Mr J. S. Furnivall, Miss Ellen Hammer, Mr Edwin Haward, Mr Cecil Hobbs, Dr Arthur Hummel, Mr G. W. Irwin, Mr Loke Wan-tho, Mr J. N. McHugh, Sir Frederick Maze, Dr Lennox Mills, Dr Th. Moll, Mr A. S. B. Olver, Mr E. Osborn, Mr H. T. Pagden, Mr L. N. Palar, Mr Harry Price, Mr Tan Cheng-lock, Mr Tan Siew-sin, Mr G. G. Thomson, Dr Tjoa Sik-ien, Mr M. V. del Tufo, Dr H. van der Valk, Dr Wabeke, Sir Richard Winstedt, and Mr Guy Wint for assistance of several kinds. My indebtedness to libraries is, of course, great, and in particular I would mention the courtesy and help I received from the staffs of the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, Washington, the British Museum Reading Room, and the respective libraries of the Institute of Pacific Relations, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Royal Asiatic Society, the Middle Temple,

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115 and the Colonial Office, and, notably, from Miss Barbara Kyle,
127 librarian of Chatham House, and her staff who seemed never at a
122 loss to produce the most out-of-the-way books and periodicals, and from Miss K. M. L. Simpson, press librarian of Chatham House, whose staff were unfailing in providing cuttings on all sorts of subjects and at the shortest notice. The entire work has been edited by Mrs Dorothy A. Cannell with a care that has increased its precision and improved the diction.

Finally I should thank Miss Margaret Cleeve, the Research Secretary of Chatham House, and Mr W. L. Holland, the Secretary General of the International Secretariat of the Institute of Pacific Relations, for their invaluable assistance. Without them and the machinery of their institutions I should have been unable to solicit the help of the above-mentioned experts and the project would have been stillborn.[1]

In order to bring the survey as up to date as possible, a Postscript is added, written in the course of a visit to all the countries of Southeast Asia in the second half of 1950. This visit was made possible by a grant for the purpose from the Rockefeller Foundation to the Institute of Pacific Relations.

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121 [1] Since the main object of this study is to throw light on contemporary happenings, more attention has been paid to the history of the past two or three hundred years than to the earlier Chinese contacts with Southeast Asia. Indeed, as in my work on the Chinese in Malaya, interest in the Chinese begins in earnest from the time when they formed more or less settled communities in the region, and minor account is taken of trading voyages or isolated travellers.

The story is brought up to the moment of writing, which differs, of course, in the several parts. The section on Indonesia, for example, stops just before the second Dutch 'police action'; for Malaya the narrative is taken to February 1949.

That the authorities are mostly European rather than Chinese is due to the fact that the analytic and descriptive habit is of only recent growth among the Chinese of Southeast Asia.